REMARKS

This is responsive to the Office Action mailed August 1, 2007. Accordingly, it is accompanied by a petition to extend the time for response one (1) month together with the required fee.

Section 102 Rejections

Claims 30 - 54 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Tindall, U.S. Patent No. 6,039,604 ("Tindall"). Among other things, it is stated in the Office Action that Tindall discloses a plurality of spaced apart earth coupling means (51) surrounding at least a portion of respective insulating sleeves (45), each connectable to a respective earth-potential layer of a machine cable, wherein the core coupling are earth-potential screened from one another so that a continuation of individual earth-connections to the other electrical connection device is possible. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections.

Item 51 is "a hollow cylindrical housing [in the body 2]." Col. 3, line 53. It is not an earth coupling means. The earthing strategy utilized in the prior art described in Tindall (Figures 1 and 2) is explained as follows:

"[A] phase barrier 16 . . . is a centrally located metal structure having three legs which extend radially outwardly between adjacent conductors. Barrier 16 is earthed via lead 17 . . . . In different embodiments barrier 16 includes a different number of legs." Col. 4, lines 5 - 10.

Tindall does not indicate that the earthing strategy used in the invention is any different. Therefore, it appears that Tindall teaches the use of a single conductor to serve as the earth-connection for a plurality of cores, and adopts a standard practice of using radially extending legs, extending from the single conductor, to provide earth-potential screening between the cores.

Independent claims 30 and 53 have been amended to recite that the claimed earth coupling means[1] are, within the body, electrically isolated from one another. This is to clarify that the claimed earth coupling means are, at least within the body of the electrical connection device, electrically separate entities, which allows carrying through, to the mating connection device, electrically separate, or individual, earth connections.

Keeping the earth coupling means separate from one another at least inside the insulating body provides important advantages including increased safety and the facilitation of fault detection.

Respectfully submitted,

Garth Janke
Reg. No. 40,662
(503) 224-2180

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[1] The term is not intended to invoke 35 U.S.C. §112, sixth paragraph.